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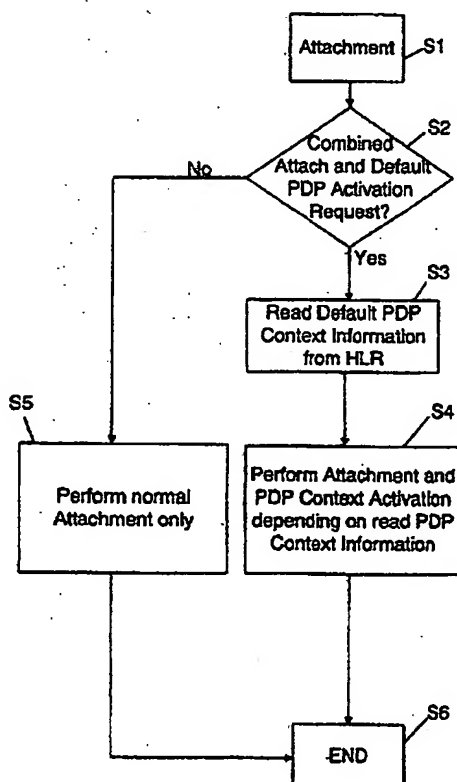
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ATTACHING A MOBILE EQUIPMENT TO A WIRELESS COMMUNICATION NETWORK



(57) Abstract: The invention provides a method and device which may perform a combined attach and communication connection establishment procedure when attaching (S1) an equipment such as a mobile station to a mobile communication network. An attach request sent from the equipment may initiate this combined attach and communication connection establishment process (S2). In the Home Location Register, communication connection parameters are set as default value which may be automatically selected (S4), for instance when receiving a combined attach and communication connection establishment request. The combined attach and communication connection establishment process reduces the signalling load in the network and speeds up communication connection establishment.

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ATTACHING A MOBILE EQUIPMENT TO A
WIRELESS COMMUNICATION NETWORK

5

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a method and device
for attaching a mobile equipment such as a mobile station
10 (MS) or any other arbitrary type of user equipment, to a
wireless communication network so as to be able to
originate or receive media such as a phone call, or data or
message transmission. Further, the invention relates to a
network element usable in such a method or system.

15

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

When a user equipment is newly attached to a wireless
20 communication network for receiving and/or originating
calls, data transmissions or the like, an attachment
process for attaching the user equipment to the wireless
communication network is necessary. When a subscriber is
then intending to originate or receive a message or a call,
25 an additional communication channel establishment process
may be necessary. For instance, in a GSM system (Global
System for Mobile Communications) such as a packet switched
service, for instance GPRS (General Packet Radio Service),
or in a UMTS system (Universal Mobile Telecommunications
30 System), the user equipment exchanges a signalling flow
with its associated node for establishing a communication
channel, for instance a PDP (Packet Data Protocol) context
or the like. This signalling leads to an additional load on
the network and may additionally result in a certain brief
35 delay before actually being able to start the transmission

or reception.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention aims at providing a method and system which allow a novel manner of attachment and activation. In accordance with one aspect of the invention, the invention aims at reducing the signaling load on the network, and/or
10 to reduce the delay before being able to start a transmission or receipt process.

The invention provides a system as defined in the independent system claim or any of the dependent system
15 claims.

Furthermore, the invention provides a method as defined in the independent method claim and/or any of the dependent method claims.

20

According to one aspect of the invention, a combined attach and communication connection establishment process may be performed when attaching a user equipment such as a mobile station to the network. This combined attach and
25 communication connection establishment process provides several advantages. For instance, the signaling load on the network is reduced as the attach and communication connection establishment process can be initiated by sending only one request from the user equipment to the
30 network. Previously, two separate messages (first an attach request and then, later on, a separate communication connection (e.g. communication channel) establishment process for allowing a user traffic transmission/reception) were requested, with the necessity of sending two different
35 requests from the user equipment to the network. In

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addition, after performing this combined attach and communication connection establishment process, the subscriber or his/her equipment is able to start immediately with any requested transmission or receipt process. Hence, the time delay previously experienced because of the necessity of performing an communication connection establishment process before starting the communication, is eliminated.

10 According to one aspect of the invention being also applicable with a normal activation procedure irrespective of any combined attach and activation procedure, a register contains some communication channel data which is set as default value and can therefore be automatically selected
15 without necessity of specifying activation details by a support node or by a user equipment. In detail, one or many of the communication connection data sets provided for a subscriber in a register are set as a default value which can be automatically selected from the register when not
20 receiving any selection request. This provision of a default value further reduces the signaling load as the user equipment now does not need to send any specific selection data for selecting communication connection data sets. The data transmission or other communication can
25 immediately commence based on the selected default values.

When the wireless communication system is structured as a packet switched system such as GPRS or UMTS, the combined attach and communication connection establishment request
30 may be a combined Attach and Activate PDP Context Request. A normal Activate PDP Context Request is defined in the GPRS standard or UMTS standard, see for instance the 3GPP specification TS 23.060.

35 The present invention is applicable to a great variety of

telecommunication systems including call and/or data or message transmitting networks, and is preferably implemented in a mobile packet switched network using, for instance, PDP context for data transmission.

5

In accordance with another aspect, the invention provides a network element usable in a method or system as described above and explained below in more detail.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10

Fig. 1 shows a basic layout of one embodiment of the invention being implemented as GPRS network;

15

Fig. 2 schematically illustrates the storage contents of a register of the wireless communication network;

Fig. 3 shows part of an attach request message for combined attach and PDP context activation;

20

Fig. 4 is a flow diagram showing a combined attach and PDP context activation procedure;

Fig. 5 illustrates the signaling data flow during a combined attach and PDP context activation procedure; and.

25

Fig. 6 shows another embodiment and illustrates the signaling data flow during a PS attach and subsequent default PDP context activation procedure.

30

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

Figure 1 illustrates the basic layout of a part of a wireless communication network (for instance a PLMN) which

35

here is implemented as a GPRS system. A mobile station (MS) 1 communicates with a Serving GPRS Support Node (SGSN) 2. The system comprises at least one Home Location Register (HLR) 3, at least one Gateway GPRS Support Node (GGSN) 4 and an Equipment Identification Register (EIR) 5. The parts may communicate with each other as indicated by the arrows shown in Figure 1. The system will normally contain a plurality of mobile stations or other user equipments 1 although only one mobile station is shown in Figure 1. Likewise, a plurality of support nodes 2 is provided which support the mobile stations or other user equipments located within the area covered by the support nodes. This structure as well as the normal signaling and information flow between the components of the wireless communication network is known and will therefore not be described in greater detail.

Figure 2 schematically illustrates part of the storage contents of a home location register 3. The register 3 stores, for each subscriber, or each group of subscribers, or at least for some of the subscribers or groups, at least one communication connection (e.g. channel) information set which here is designated as PDP context information, one of which is set as default value and is automatically selected when not receiving any specific selecting request pointing to a different PDP context information. The register (HLR) 3 includes subscription information and then information about the PDP contexts of the subscriber. One or many of the PDP contexts may be set as default.

In the present embodiment, for each subscriber, or at least some of the subscribers, three different PDP context information sets (for PDP context activation or creation, or the like) 6, 7, 8 are respectively stored, wherein context information 1 (reference numeral 6) is set as

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default value. The context information "Context 2",
reference numeral 7, and "Context 3", reference numeral 8,
are deliberately selectable by a subscriber when requested
by the subscriber. The database of register 3 contains such
5 triplets of information for each subscriber or at least for
some of the subscribers or a group of subscribers. Of
course, the number of alternative PDP context information
sets may be varied according to design and need and may
range from only one (default value only), to two, three or
10 more selectively selectable information.

Generally, before the mobile station 1 is able to send or
receive information, it must first perform an attach
proceedings, for instance after switching it on. In
15 addition, in some services such as packet data switching
oriented networks, for instance GPRS or UMTS, an additional
communication channel establishment procedure will normally
be carried out which is called PDP context activation (or
creation) in GPRS or UMTS. According to the present
20 invention, the attach and PDP context activation processes
are combined. The mobile stations can therefore perform a
combined attach and default PDP context activation which
decreases signaling in the radio interface (air-interface).

25 This combined attach and communication channel
establishment procedure is shown in Figures 4 and 5. The
default PDP context or contexts is (are) activated
according to the subscription-based information stored in
the register 3, that is based on "Context 1" information,
30 reference numeral 6. If requested by the subscription of
one or more subscribers, multiple default PDP contexts are
allowed.

The quality of service (QoS) of the default PDP context is
35 preferably such that the mobile station 1 is only charged

if data is transferred or received on the default PDP context, but no time-based charging is performed for the default PDP context alone. The quality of service of the default PDP context will be decided based on the subscription and will be a default value unless otherwise prescribed. If a specific quality of service is desired, the subscriber will then have to select one of the different context information such as 7, or 8, provided same define an appropriate QoS (Quality of Service).

Subscribers mainly using the packet switched service (for instance GPRS or UMTS) for transferring voice, are allowed to define the QoS of the default PDP context appropriately.

Figure 3 shows part of an Attach request 9 which is sent from the mobile station 1 to the support node 2 for initiating the attach procedure, which is, in the present invention, a combined attach and PDP context activation request. The Attach request 9 comprises a data field 10 defining IMSI (International Mobile Subscriber Identifier) or, if available, P-TMSI and RAI (Routing Area Identity). The "Attach Type" field 11 of the Attach request 9 indicates which type of attach is to be performed which may basically be "GPRS attach only", "GPRS attach while already IMSI attached", "combined GPRS/IMSI attach" or, as indicated in Figure 3, combined "PS (packet switched) + default PDP context activation".

In case the attach request transmitted from the mobile station 1 specifies the attach type "PS + DEFAULT PDP CONTEXT ACTIVATION" as shown in Figure 3, the system is informed on the desired combined attach and PDP context activation. The support node 2 then not only performs a "packet switched" attach but is furthermore adapted so as to automatically initiate, when receiving this request and

having the attachment effected, a default PDP context activation without necessity for the mobile station 1 to send any additional command.

- 5 The attach request 9 contains further fields such as "DRX parameters" which are not shown in Figure 3 and are in accordance with the customary specification of attach requests, see the respective standards. The attach request 9 differs from these standards only in so far as it is now
10 possible to indicate, in field 11, a combined attach and communication channel establishment process such as "attach and default PDP context activation".

- Figure 4 shows an attach process flow. In step S1, the
15 mobile station 1 sends an Attach request to the support node 2 which then checks, in step S2, the received Attach request so as to detect whether a normal attach such as a "packet switched" attach is requested, or a combined attach and default PDP context activation request is transmitted.
20 This check is performed by examining the data field 11 of the Attach request 9 specifying the desired attach type. When combined attach and default PDP activation request is received by the support node 2, same is adapted to address the Home Location Register 3, and to read (or receive) the
25 subscriber information including the default PDP context information stored therein. All the subscription information is transferred from the HLR to the SGSN. In step S4, the system then performs an attachment as well as one or many PDP context activations depending on the read
30 default PDP context information.

- If no combined attach and default PDP activation request is detected in step S2, the process proceeds to step S5 and performs a normal attachment only according to the
35 designated attach type. As part of steps S4, S5, the

support node 2 may also send an Attach Accept message to the mobile station 1 for informing same on the effected attachment. The attach process then ends (step S6).

- 5 Figure 5 shows the combined attach and PDP context activation in greater detail.

In step 1., the mobile station 1 initiates an attach and default PDP context activation by sending an Attach Request
10 as shown in Figure 3. The Attach Type parameter 11 indicates that combined attach and default PDP context activation is required. In the present case, the Attach Request is sent because the mobile station 1 has switched on. In step 2., the new support node 2 (new SGSN) sends an
15 Identification Request to the old support node (old SGSN) which responds with an Identification Response defining the IMSI of the mobile station 1. If the mobile station 1 should be unknown in both the old and new SGSN, the new support node sends an Identity Request to the mobile
20 station 1 (step 3.) which transmits an Identity Response indicating its IMSI. In step 4., an authentication may be performed. Further, in step 5., an equipment checking ("IMEI check; IMEI = International Equipment Identification") may be performed by addressing the
25 Equipment Identification Register (EIR) 5.

In step 6., the support node 2 informs the Home Location Register 3 on the new location in case the support node number has changed since the GPRS detach, or it is the very
30 first attach. The old support node is requested to cancel the location which is acknowledged by sending back an Cancel Location Acknowledgment.

Further, the Home Location Register 3 sends an Insert
35 Subscriber Data to the new support node 2 which subscriber

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data includes information on the default PDP context(s).
The new support node validates the MS's presence in the new routing area, and sends back an Insert Subscriber Data Acknowledgement to the Home Location Register 3.

- 5 Furthermore, the Home Location Register 3 sends back, as part of step 6, an Update Location Acknowledgement message.

- In step 7., RAB assignment procedure is performed for the default PDP context(s) according to the information
10 received from the Home Location Register 3 in step 6. This is a preferred implementation of the invention. The procedure consists in sending a RAB Assignment Request from the new support node 2 to the radio access network RAN transmitting/receiving the radio waves to/from the mobile
15 station 1, setting up the radio bearer between the radio access network RAN and MS (by sending a Radio Bearer Setup and a Radio Bearer Setup Complete, and finally sending a RAB Assignment Response.

- 20 In the next step 8., the new support node 2 sends a Create PDP Context Request to the gateway support node 4 so that the default PDP context(s) is (are) activated in the support node(s) 4 according to the information received from the Home Location Register 3 in step 6. In step 9.,
25 the support node 2 sends an Attach Accept message to the mobile station 1 for acknowledging the attach and default PDP context activation. The attached accept message may include information about the activated PDP context(s). The mobile station 1 may acknowledge the parameters sent by the
30 support node 2, by sending an Attach Complete message in step 10. However, step 10. may also be omitted.

Steps 7 and 8 are performed N times, N representing the number of default PDP contexts.

According to the invention, the combined attach and default PDP context activation is therefore performed by storing default PDP context information in a register such as a Home Location Register, and by activating the default PDP context(s) according to the subscriber-based information stored in the register. The quality of service (QoS) of the default PDP context(s) may be fixed but may also be decided based on the subscription.

10 A basic idea is to activate default PDP context(s) according to the subscription information received from the HLR. As an alternative, the mobile station MS may send some parameters for the default PDP context(s) and the HLR completes the missing parameters. As an example, APN
15 (Access Point Name) may be sent from MS, and QoS from HLR.

The PDP context activation(s) is (are) therefore automatically performed based on the HLR subscription. This leads to a reduction of the signalling in the radio
20 interface, without creating any limitations on the network and its use. Furthermore, it is not necessary, for PDP context activation, to send a QoS field and/or APN from the mobile station 1 to support node 2 or 3, because the Home Location Register has one or more special contexts which
25 are marked as default contexts and are automatically selected. This possibility of setting default contexts in the Home Location Register has also advantages with regard to more advanced services such as UMTS services wherein the users are likely to have more than one subscribed context,
30 which accordingly define different session handling parameters.

Fig. 6 illustrates a further embodiment.

35 In the first embodiment shown in Figs. 1 to 5, the default

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PDP context(s) are automatically activated at PS attach. In the embodiment of Fig. 6, the MS first performs a PS attach and then afterwards indicates that the default PDP context(s) should be activated. In both cases, the default
5 PDP context information comes from the HLR.

According to the embodiments, default contexts are provided also in cases where a normal procedure (attach being performed with a subsequent PDP context activation upon
10 request) does not apply.

In the following, the steps shown in Fig. 6 will be described in more detail with reference to the step numbering of Fig. 6:
15

Step 1. PS (Packet-Switched) attach is performed (e.g. as described in 3GPP TSG 23.060).

Step 2. The MS sends a request to activate default PDP context(s) to the SGSN.

20 Step 3. The SGSN initiates the activation of the default PDP context(s) as indicated in the subscription information received from the HLR at PS attach (step 1). The radio access bearer establishment procedure may be performed.

25 Step 4. The SGSN sends the Create PDP Context Request message to the GGSN for each default PDP context. The GGSN creates the PDP context and acknowledges by sending the Create PDP Context Response message to the SGSN.

30 Step 5. The SGSN acknowledges the activation of the default PDP context(s) by sending a response to the MS. The response may include information about the activated PDP context(s).

Although specific embodiments have been described above,
35 the invention is also applicable with regard to other types

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of communication networks such as fixed or circuit-switched networks.

CLAIMS

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1. System for mobile communication, comprising at least one database storing information on a plurality of subscribers, the information including communication connection data defining the handling or establishing of communications connections of subscribers attachable to the mobile communication, wherein at least part of the communication connection data in the database is set as default value data which can be automatically read out by the system as communication connection default data defining the handling or establishing of a communication connection when a first network element sends a request to the system.

2. A system according to claim 1, wherein the first network element is a user equipment

3. A system according to claim 1, wherein the first network element is a support node

4. System according to claim 2, wherein the user equipment is a Mobile Station.

5. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the support node is a Serving GPRS Support Node.

6. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein a control means is adapted to access the database for reading out the communication connection default data in case of a user equipment requesting an

- 15 -

attachment to the system by sending an attach request.

7. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the system is adapted to set a
5 communication connection according to the communication connection default data as part of the attachment.

8. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said request is a combined attach and
10 communication connection establishment request.

9. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the communication connection default data define default PDP context(s), and the system is adapted to
15 always activate the default PDP context(s) according to the information from the database when the request is sent from the user equipment.

10. System according to any one of the preceding
20 claims, wherein the default value data are automatically read out only when an attach request sent from the user equipment does not specify commands for selecting other communication connection data for handling or establishing at least one communication connection.

25
11. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the user equipment is adapted to perform a attach procedure when attaching to the network, and thereafter to request a communication connection
30 establishment based on the default value data.

12. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the default value data are PDP (Packet Data Protocol) context data.

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13. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the request contains a data field specifying the desired type of attachment.

5 14. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the database is a Home Location Register.

15 15. System according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the communication connection data are PDP
10 context data.

15 16. Method for connecting a subscriber to a mobile communication system comprising at least one database in which communication connection data is stored for a
15 plurality of subscribers, at least part of the communication connection data in the database being set as default value data for defining the handling or
establishing of a communication connection, wherein, when a first network element sends a request to the system or
20 database, the default value data are automatically read out as communication connection default data defining the handling or establishing of a communication connection
for the first network element.

25 17. Method according to claim 16, wherein the first network element is a user equipment.

30 18. Method according to claim 17, wherein the user equipment is a Mobile Station.

19. Method according to any one of claims 16 to 17, wherein the database is accessed for reading out the communication connection default data in case of a user equipment requesting an attachment to the system by sending
35 an attach request.

20. Method according to any one of claims 16 to 19,
wherein a communication channel is set according to the
communication connection default data as part of an
5 attachment of a user equipment to the system.

21. Method according to any one of claims 16 to 20,
wherein the communication connection default data define
default PDP context(s), and the default PDP context(s)
10 is/are always activated the according to the information
from the database when an attach request is sent from the
user equipment.

22. Method according to any one of claims 16 to 21,
15 wherein the default value data are automatically read out
only when an attach request sent from the user equipment
does not specify commands for selecting other communication
connection data for handling communication connections.

20

23. Method according to any one of claims 16 to 22,
wherein the user equipment is adapted to perform a attach
procedure when attaching to the network, and thereafter to
25 request a communication connection establishment based on
the default value data.

24. Method according to any one of claims 16 to 23,
wherein the default value data are PDP (packet data
30 protocol) context data.

25. Method according to anyone of claims 16 to 24,
wherein an attach request contains a data field specifying
the desired type of attachment.

35

26. Method according to anyone of claims 16 to 25,
wherein the database is a Home Location Register.

27. Method according to any one of claims 16 to 26,
5 wherein the communication connection data are PDP context
data.

28. Network element, preferably for use in a system as
defined in any one of claims 1 to 15, or in a method as
10 defined in any one of claims 16 to 27, comprising a
database, in which at least part of the communication
connection data in the said database is set as default
value data for defining the handling or establishing of a
communication connection (s) .

15 29. Network element according to claim 28, wherein the
communication connection default data define default PDP
context(s) .

20 30. Network element according to claim 28 or 29,
wherein the network element is a Home Location Register.

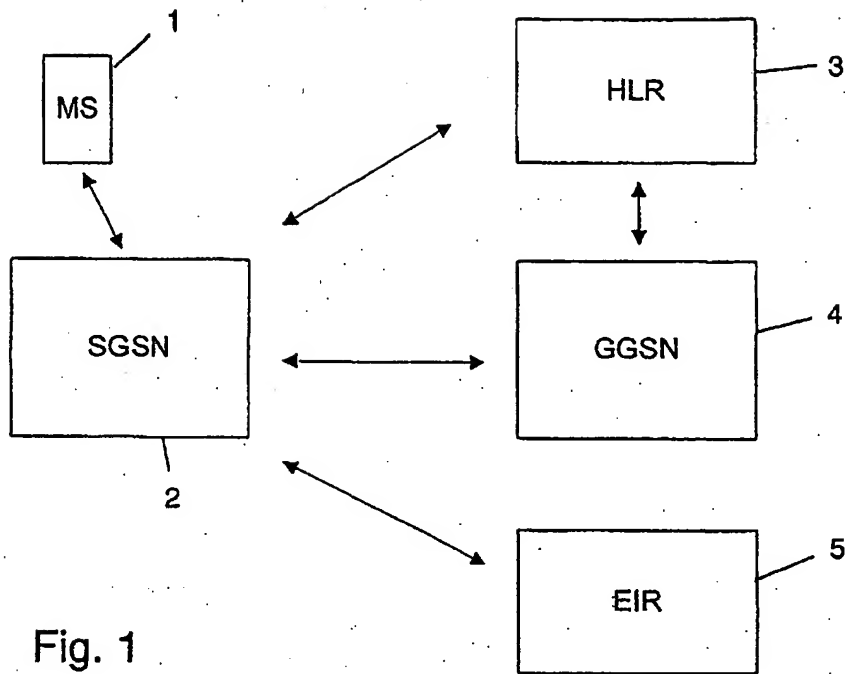


Fig. 1

Fig. 2

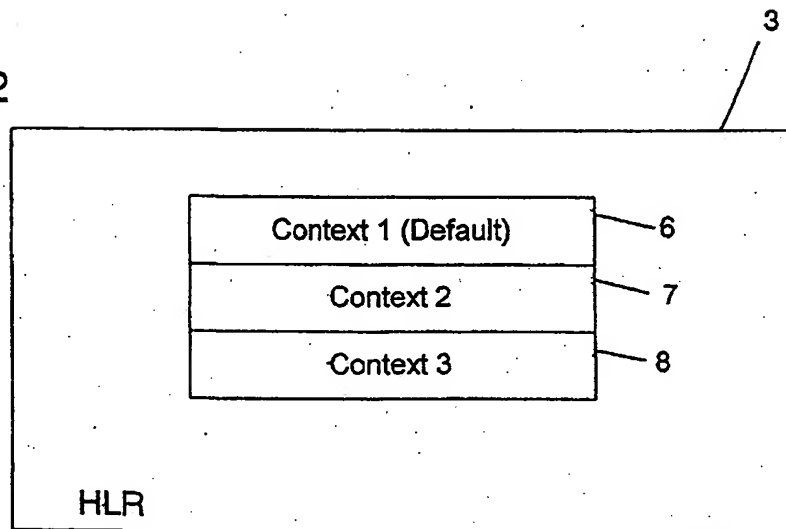


Fig. 3

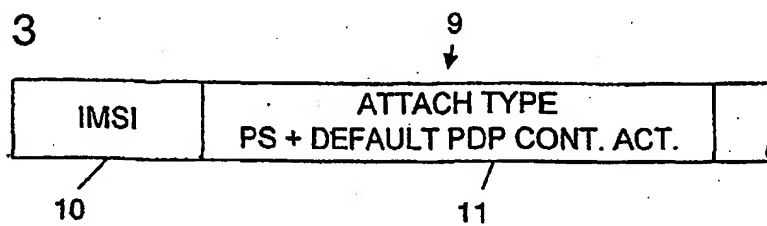


Fig. 4

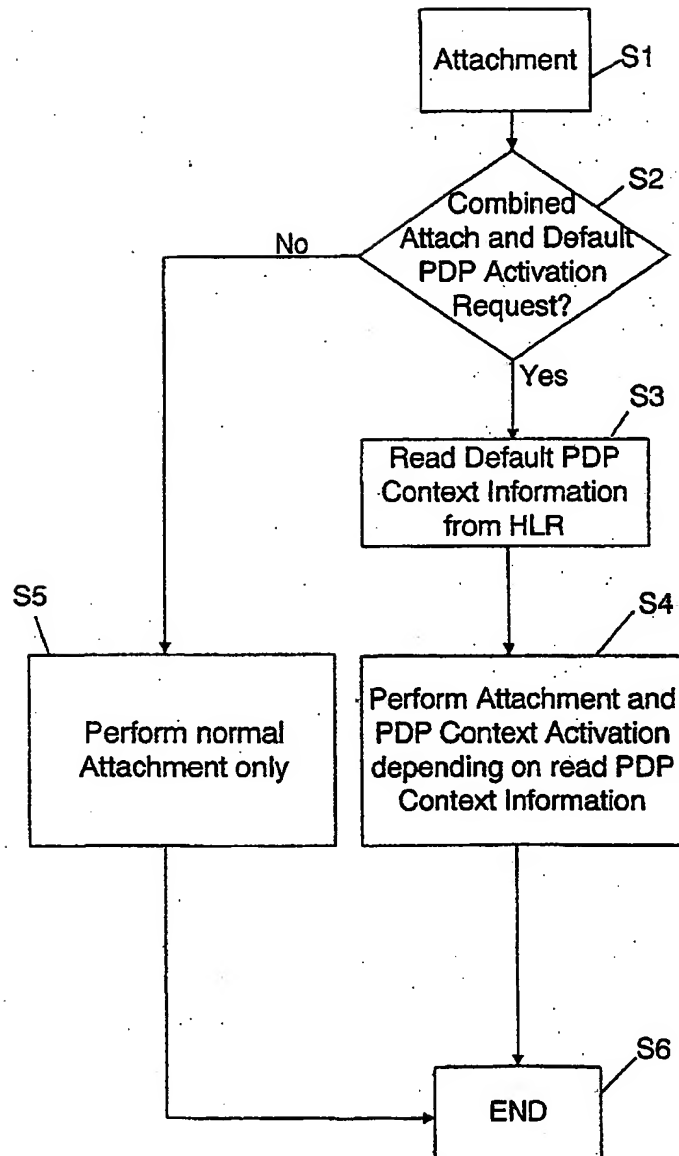
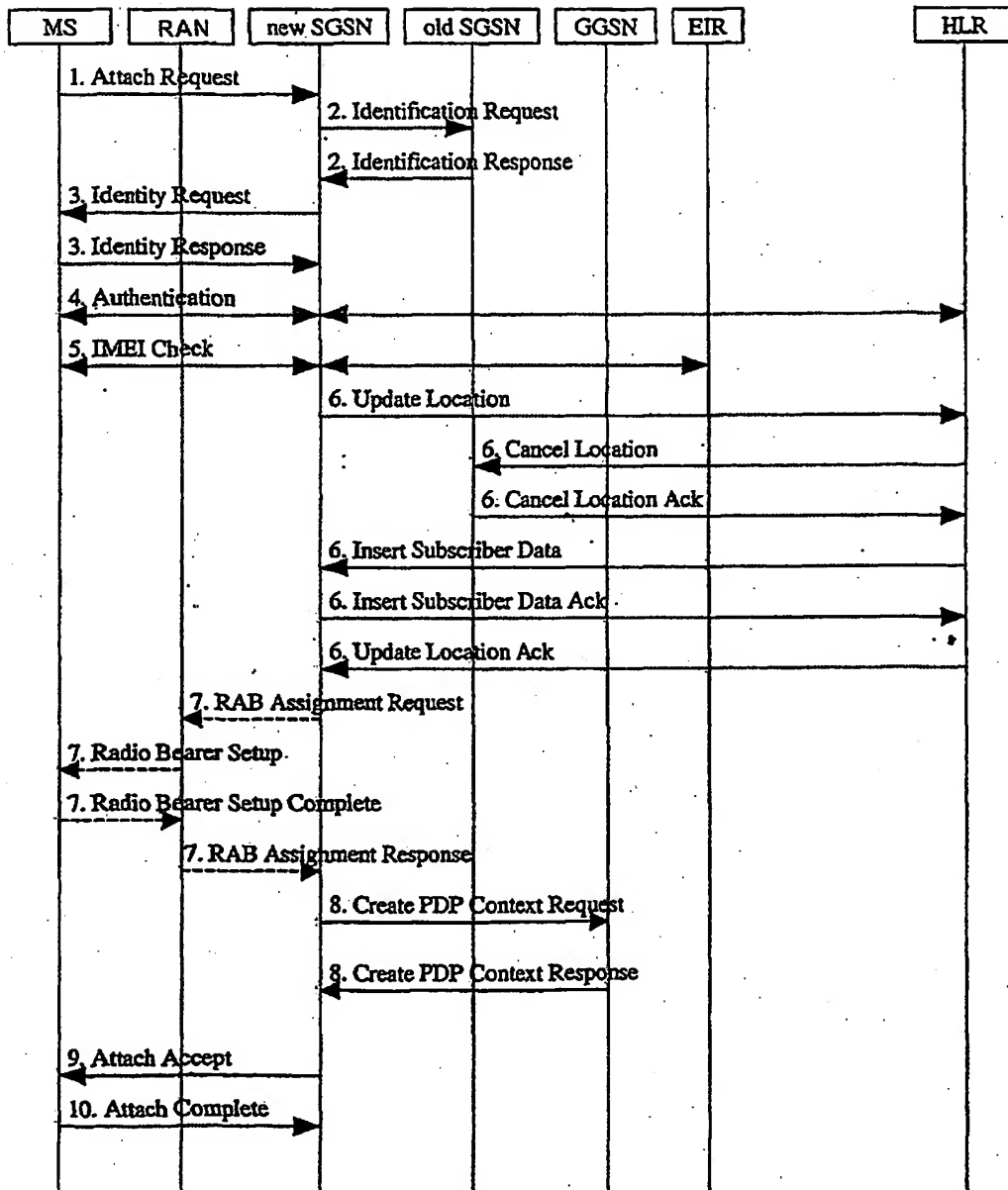


Fig. 5



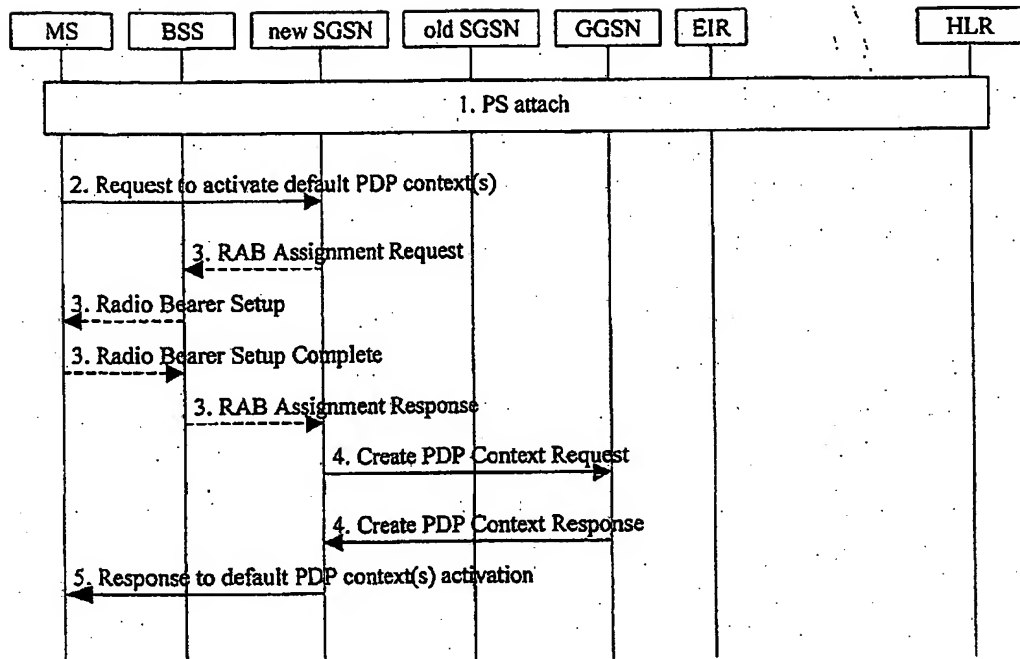


Fig. 6

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.
PCT/EP 00/10111

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC 7 H04Q7/38		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 7 H04Q		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Electronic data base consulted during the International search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used) EPO-Internal, WPI Data, INSPEC		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 6 081 731 A (JOENSUU ERKKI ET AL) 27 June 2000 (2000-06-27)	1,2,4,6, 7,10,13, 14, 16-20, 22,25, 26,28,30
Y	abstract; figure 1 column 3, line 30 - column 4, line 26; figures 2,2 column 6, line 14 - line 27 -/-	3,5,8, 12,15, 24,27,29
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patent family members are listed in annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principles or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "Z" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 29 June 2001		Date of mailing of the international search report 06/07/2001
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 6818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax (+31-70) 340-3016		Authorized officer von der Straten, G

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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